



BERNICLA JUBATA.

Maned Goose.

Anas jubata, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxi.

Hawkesbury Duck, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 358. pl. in title-page.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 357.

Bernicla jubata, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 63.—Eyton's Mon. Anat., p. 87.—List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 128.

Maŕ-rang-añ-ner, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Wood Duck, Colonists of New South Wales and Swan River.

DURING the period I had the privilege of observing the birds of Australia in a state of nature, no one of the natatorial forms interested me more than the present species; and the result of my observations enables me to state that it seldom, if ever, visits Van Diemen's Land or any of the islands in Bass's Straits; but that on the continent of Australia it is met with at Swan River in South Australia and in New South Wales, consequently its range extends across the country between the 25th and 30th degrees of south latitude. During the early days of the colony of New South Wales, it was very common on the rivers near Sydney, particularly on the Hawkesbury; at the present time it is sometimes seen there, and is still numerous on the Hunter and other rivers towards the interior limits of the colony. In South Australia it is one of the commonest of the water birds, frequenting the brooks of the interior. In the colony of Swan River, although nearly confined to the inland districts, it is not considered a bird of any rarity. No specimen has yet been procured at Port Essington, nor, as far as I am aware, on any part of the north coast. It presents a very pleasing appearance while flying up and down the brooks in flocks of from six to thirty in number, and is equally interesting when perched in small companies on the branches of fallen trees which have found a resting-place in the beds of the rivers and water-holes, or when resting on the topmost branches of the high gum-trees in the midst of the woods. Its flesh is excellent, and not unfrequently forms an acceptable repast for the settled colonist and the weary traveller, who from a love of exploration has ventured far beyond the precincts of civilization. It frequently utters a loud barking note so unlike the voice of any other goose, as at once to excite the attention of any person who may be traversing the parts of the country it inhabits. I found it to be tolerably tame in disposition, which circumstance enabled me to procure numerous examples without difficulty.

It usually breeds in the hollow parts of large trees, those chosen for the purpose being often situated in the bush far away from water.

The food consists of grasses, and aquatic plants, snails and insects.

The sexes vary considerably in size and in the beauty of their plumage, the male far exceeding his mate in both respects.

The male has the head and neck rich brown; the lengthened plumes down the back of the neck black; back, lesser wing-coverts, tertiaries and scapularies brownish grey; the scapularies very broadly margined on their external webs, and very narrowly on their internal webs with deep velvety black; lower part of the back, rump, upper tail-coverts and tail deep black; greater wing-coverts dark grey largely tipped with pure white, the two colours separated by a narrow line of black; spurious wing and primaries very dark brown, the latter deepening into black at their extremities; outer webs of the secondaries or speculum rich glossy green broadly margined with white, their inner webs grey; the last two have their outer webs entirely glossy green and their inner webs grey, with the exception of a narrow margin of white; breast-feathers buffy white, each feather crossed by two irregular bands of brown, the margin between the bands freckled with brown, and a spot of black at each end of the band nearest the tip, giving the whole a mottled appearance; flanks silver-grey, delicately pencilled with fine wavy lines of black; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts deep glossy black; bill olive-brown; irides very dark brown; legs and feet dark brown.

The female has the head and neck pale brown, speckled with white on the sides of the face; all the upper surface and wings greyish brown; the scapularies stained with black on their outer webs; lower part of the back black; primaries brown; secondaries and greater coverts tipped with white, the former with a trace of the glossy green so conspicuous in the male, at the base of the outer webs; the markings of the breast are similar to those of the male, but they are larger and paler, and the feathers are destitute of the minute freckles on the margins of the feathers; flanks light brown, crossed with bars of white freckled with brown; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts white.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.